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The Admiral: Memoirs of Albert Gleaves, USN

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printed as endpapers to this volume, emphasizes his royal connections as little else can, but the irony of this book, and of Mountbatten's life, is that he was a man of great professional ability whatever the hindrances of royal connections and aristocratic manners in a modern navy. Mountbatten overcame them through professional competence, rising to the top through his own skill and determination, as well as his connections. He was loved, even adored, by his admirers and by many who served under him; and he was despised, even hated, by his rivals and his superiors. His wealth, his connections, his tastes, his interests were all unusual—and certainly beyond the scope of the average naval officer—but despite the attractions of so entirely different a world, Mountbatten remained intensely devoted to the navy as a profession. His professional views and opinions, however, were not those of an aristocrat. He fought to democratize the officer corps, and to make the navy a more efficient service within the context of the Ministry of Defence.

After 700 pages of reading, one feels that he has a clear appreciation of a man whose life, at times, blended into the general flow of history, particularly in World War II, in India, and in Whitehall, but we come to know him as a man, not an abstraction. He was brilliant and successful, ambitious, hard-working and knowledgeable, but he was also impetuous, egotistical, vain, intemperate, and sometimes, unwise. On reflection, one must appreciate the

very thin line which separates spectacular failure and meteoric success in those who are ambitious to be among the great.

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Gleaves, Albert. *The Admiral: Memoirs of Albert Gleaves, USN*. Pasadena, Calif.: Hope Publishing House, 1985. 286pp. \$9.95

This autobiography of a senior officer in World War I brings into print a significant addition to recorded U.S. naval history, half a century after the author's death. It covers the period from 1873 when our aging wood-iron fleet stood 12th among navies, to 1922 when a great building program would soon make our Navy first in firepower.

Albert Gleaves, from Nashville, Tennessee, entered the Naval Academy at the age of 15, graduating in 1877. After the Academy, Gleaves' career followed the pattern of the times, with duty in the Mediterranean, the Far East and at home. At first the ships in which he served were wooden-hulled sailing ships with auxiliary steam. In 1889 he joined the first ship of the "new Navy," the steel gunboat *Dolphin*, then he was ordered to the cruiser *Boston* and in her sailed around Cape Horn to duty off Chile and in the Hawaiian Islands. In one of his few War College tales, he tells of the grounding of the new second-class battleship *Texas* on Goat Island, with the College students lined up by

today's Luce Hall observing that ship's maneuvering difficulties.

Gleaves' Spanish War service was in command of the *Cushing*, our first steel torpedo boat. In this little ship his first assigned task was bringing Assistant Secretary of the Navy Theodore Roosevelt to Newport from Oyster Bay to speak at the War College, a voyage which would help the admiral's Navy future. The *Cushing's* wartime work was with the fleet in the Caribbean, primarily on despatch boat duty from fleet to Key West and return.

Promoted to rear admiral in 1914, Gleaves relieved Captain William S. Sims in command of the Atlantic Torpedo Flotilla, soon designated Destroyer Force Atlantic. In this billet he was in Newport when the German *U-53* visited that city in October 1916. In civilian garb he inspected the submarine at the invitation of her skipper, noting her loaded torpedo tubes. The next day she sank several Allied merchantmen south of Block Island.

In the winter of 1916-1917 the Atlantic destroyers spent time in the Navy Yards preparing for the war soon to come. Gleaves was a "Type Commander" in today's parlance, and at war's outbreak his ships were speedily sent eastward. He, however, stayed behind. But his Annapolis classmate, William S. Benson, made Gleaves Commander, Cruiser-Transport Force, tasked with getting the American Expeditionary Forces to Europe. In his flagship, the cruiser *Seattle*, Gleaves took the first convoy to Europe in July 1917, bringing

14,000 soldiers and marines safely across. He is credited with the development of the convoy tactics by which over 2,000,000 men and their equipment were sent overseas by November 1918. Much of this tour found Gleaves in New York, and true to form is covered as other "shore duty," briefly.

All the foregoing, up to 1919, occupies three-fifths of *The Admiral*. The remainder describes his final cruise as full admiral in command of the Asiatic Fleet. With the armored cruiser *South Dakota* (renamed *Huron*) as flagship, Gleaves spent a busy year and a half during which Japan changed from ally to rival, the Allied occupation forces were withdrawn from eastern Siberia, there was constant rivalry and fighting between Chinese warlords, and Britain and France tried to reestablish their presence in the area.

My criticism of the book is primarily editorial, for there is too much misspelling and misprinting.

The Admiral is worthwhile reading for those who want to learn more about that period in history when the U.S. Navy changed from a small number of wood or iron sailing ships scattered about the world to the world's most powerful fleet, based in California looking westward towards Japan.

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Rear Admiral, U.S. Navy (Ret.)

Harlec, John. *The Marine from Manatee: A Tradition of Rifle Marksmanship*.